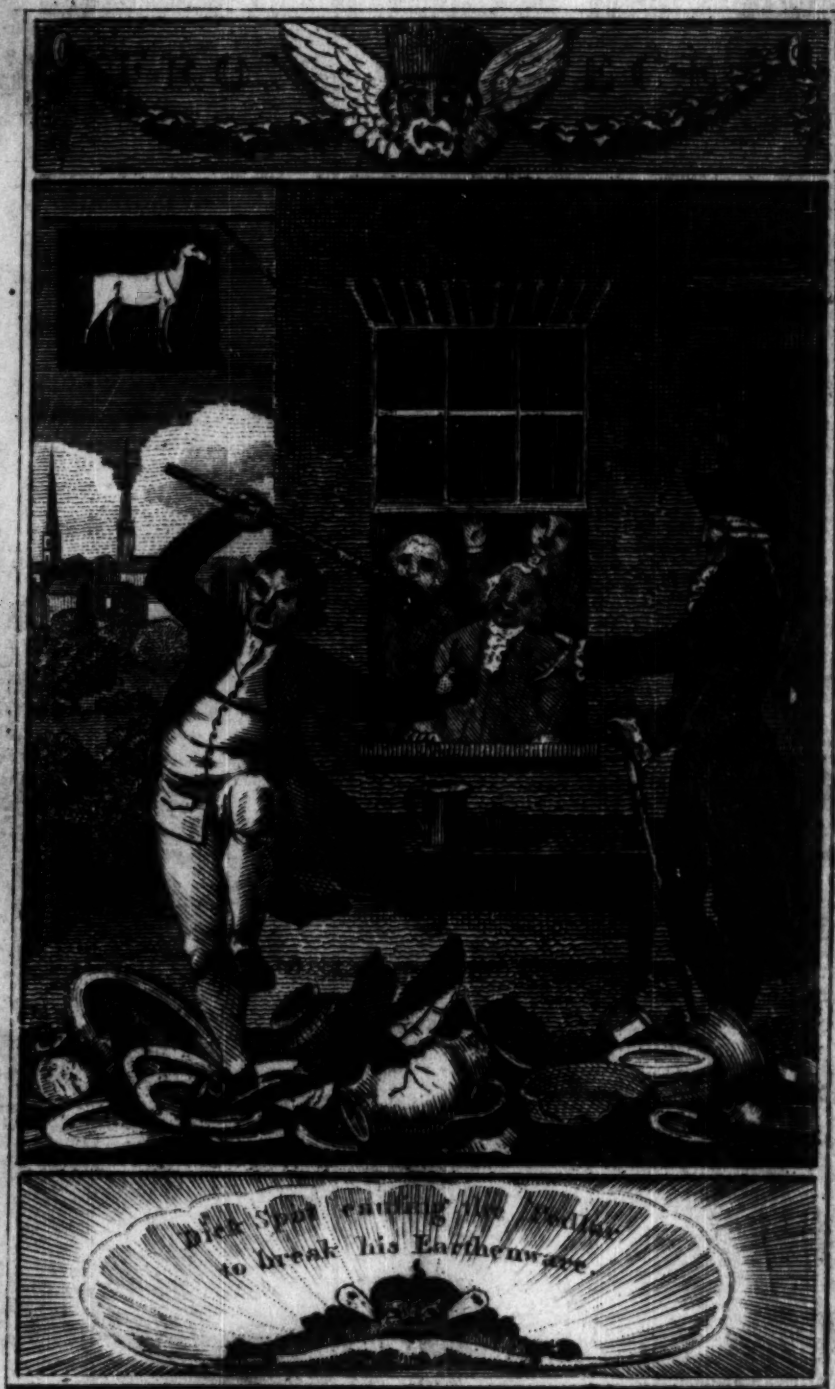


Printed, for & under the direction of I. Roe, July 3. 1798.



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THE
LIFE
AND
MYSTERIOUS TRANSACTIONS
OF
RICHARD MORRIS, Esq.
BETTER KNOWN BY THE NAME OF *K*
Dick Spot, the Conjuror,
PARTICULARLY IN DERBYSHIRE AND SHROPSHIRE.

WRITTEN BY AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE,
WHO WAS A CRITICAL OBSERVER OF ALL HIS ACTIONS FOR
NEAR FIFTY YEARS.

INCLUDING

Singular, whimsical, and curious Anecdotes of many living Characters—Unaccountable and mysterious Transactions—Lost Property restored—Life preserved—Robberies prevented—Deaths frequently foretold. (particularly that of the unfortunate King of Sweden, which he declared in print more than three Months before it happened)—And proving every Thing belonging to the History of this wonderful Man, to have been beyond the settled Rules by which human Actions and Life are in general regulated.

London:

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THE LIFE

OF

DICK SPOT, THE CONJUROR.

IT is evident that, for wise ends, the consent of society has appointed different stations and circumstances in human life: different capacities, qualifications, and degrees of improvement, will, of course, as they make the aid and assistance of each other necessary, occasion dependence upon others: different degrees of application and industry, will form higher and lower stations: superiority, either in property or usefulness to the public, must create a diversity in rank. The poor man's labour is as necessary for the advantage of the rich, as the latter's generosity, compassion, and liberality, are for the comfort and support of the poor. Though, from the unalterable relations in which mankind stand to each other, there must arise pre-eminence and subordination; and though in all societies various distinctions of conditions and circumstances are necessary, yet, in many respects, it must be allowed, we are all truly dependant upon one another.

Pope observes, "Some are, and must be, greater than the rest." And in the view I have drawn the above, the COUNTRY CONJUROR will be found, in his place, as useful as the village attorney, or the magistrate of the metropolis.

RICHARD MORRIS, the subject of the following pages, who seems to have been born to amuse the vulgar, and puzzle the wise, was a native of Bakewell, in Derbyshire, where he was born in 1710. The diminutive appellation of DICK SPOT was entailed upon him from the singular circumstance of his being born with a large black spot upon his face, near his nose; and this name he carried to his grave. His father was a soldier at the time of the Union, and died before Dick had completed his sixth year; so that little of his singular character can be attributed to him; but from his aunt, who brought him up, something may be traced, a few outlines, in which, however, the old lady can appear but very far removed in the back-ground of his character.

By his mother's side he was nearly related to the late Sir Richard Arkwright, the greatest mechanic in the kingdom; and by his father, he also claimed relationship to the founder of the Soho manufactory.

Mrs. Morris survived her husband but two years, and left her son to the care of her sister, Deborah Heathcore, who gave him as good learning as her circumstances would permit, which, though

not affluent, was liberal, sufficient to give him an introduction to any business he might have an inclination for.

Dick certainly, during the time of his being at school, applied his talent to a good purpose, for he was much the best calculator of any man of his acquaintance; and his observations of life obviated and removed the necessity of applying to books: for it is a fact, that, in all his travels, he never carried a book, nor even of roads or directions, but possessed every thing, as it were, by intuitive knowledge. The famous Crichton, so much spoken of for his premature genius, would diminish by comparison: neither has any biographer, since the time of Plutarch, recorded such an astonishing character as that I am about to lay before the public.

His hours of amusement were not spent like those of other children; a sullen and mysterious reserve marked his manners; yet at times this thoughtfulness would give way to athletic exercise; but this was seldom, for he seemed at most times to be absorbed in himself, and would for a long time keep his eyes so fixed upon some inanimate object, that observers used to call him the Sullen Boy. But whenever he mixed with the neighbouring children, his curious contrivances, and little artifices, always made them court his favour: and though he would always be master of whatever game he was playing at, he always contrived to obtain his superiority by such means as could not disgust his playmates.

Mrs. Heatcote, his aunt, who, it has been observed, was independent in circumstances, contrived to better them, by advising the young, and amusing the aged, in their various concerns of life. The truth is, she was a fortune-teller; and report declares, that she had a happy knack of drawing the secrets of futurity from their hidden recess. From this circumstance, Dick might borrow the hint; but he certainly out-run his aunt as far, before he was twelve years old, as a wooden clock is removed from a repeater or a stop-watch, though each will declare the time of the day. Her fee was constantly half-a-crown; but her nephew never opened his lips before the physician's fee was posted; i. e. a Guinea.

Dick, as has been already observed, shewed an uncommon dexterity at all those little games which usually occupy the minds of children in their early youth. The boys, when they played, always coveted to have him on their side; and understanding that he had a foreknowledge of many things, used to consult him when they made their little matches, which were circumstances of great importance in their thoughts, who should get the victory. These trifles he often left undecided; but if ever he gave his opinion in such trivial affairs, the persons forwarned fared well by their consultation; for his judgment was referred to like a petty oracle, and the end was always observed to answer his prediction. But though Dick was yet a boy, he was not consulted by boys only; his penetration and insight into things of a higher nature, got air, and being attested by credible witnesses, won him the esteem of persons of discretion and character.

DICK SPOT, THE CONJUROR.

7

Before he had attained his twelfth year, he was the oracle to be applied to in many difficult points; such as for the recovery of strayed cattle, stolen goods; and even to give his opinion upon the probability of marriage between parties who were anxious for that happy union. His aunt Deborah, who was a very discreet sort of a woman, very much disliked this propensity in her nephew, although she practised it herself, and often denied him when he was at home; but, in general, the seeking party would be sure to meet with him soon in the town, diverting himself with his companions; when he was consulted with as much solicitude and credit to himself, as the Tripos of Apollo was at Delphos in ancient times.

It was highly entertaining to see this young village conjuror taken aside from his companions by people of respectability, and friends who were hunting for him, to get out of him his opinion upon matters of moment. His fame spread so fast and wide, that persons from the adjacent, as well as from distant counties, came to consult him; and some by letters referred to his judgment, through the medium of the town people of Bakewell, for his advice in the probability of success; and once particularly, when a mine was to be opened, the owner of the estate absolutely questioned him as to the richness of the vein, with other particulars relating thereto, all which he answered so much to his credit, that he was reputed to be in possession of the real gift of prophetic foresight.

His habit of fortune-telling, as it may be called, obtained him so much credit, that he had a perfect museum of play things, for every one added something to his store. It was not women only, or persons in love, that consulted him upon trivial affairs, but men of property, and merchants who had vessels upon the sea, were glad of his opinion upon the security of their property, which they looked upon to be as safe as the under-writers names for the value of the cargo. If he but told them that the ship would arrive safe, and return safe, they made themselves easy, and enjoyed a calm of mind unknown to an anxious uncertainty, and state of uneasiness. Had his mind been directed towards gaming, he must have realized a great fortune; for he was the means of considerable sums being won by his consulters, who were sure to come off winners, if they followed his advice in observing the prosperous hours of gaming, and abstaining from play when fortune was adverse. For the verification of this, one Mr. Darwin, who had retired from the public line of business, having long kept the George Inn at Bakewell, having little else to do, played more for amusement than gain, sometimes tried the evil hour when he was cautioned by the boy not to hazard a game, and constantly lost it; though he did his best, and used more circumspection than at other times when he won. At first, as he told me, he would try, when the boy foretold him his ill-fortune, whether it would prove true, and relying upon the mere chance and turn of the game, he had always, as he observed, a run of ill-luck on those forbidden days and hours; and he never failed of good luck, if he chose the fortunate hours directed by the boy.

That some supernatural agency of spiritual inspiration was the peculiar gift of Mr. Morris, none, who knew him, can deny; for the most scrupulous of his admirers must admit, that he performed what no other power but magic could produce; but leaving that out of the question, the power of the second sight of the Islanders of Scotland is sufficient to account for all his fore-knowledge. Dr. Johnson's journey to the Western Islands, was chiefly performed to ascertain the wonders of this gift, and he returned fully satisfied of its certainty and effect. The following may serve in one instance, as well as a thousand. A gentleman's servant, a very serious man, who knew Dick's mother, called upon them one morning early, when, as soon as young Morris saw him, he told him he smelt some venison, and he was sure they would shortly have some in the house. He was right, for his friend was just going to the inn, to receive a side of venison for his master, which he soon returned with, as a present from another gentleman, who resided at Matlock, and who was coming to make a stay at Bakewell for two or three days. Mr. Morris's actions have been as severely scrutinized as the shrewdness of philosophy could invent; and though many of his transactions are not easily reconcileable to mechanical principles of science, yet he must be exonerated from the criminal imputation of magic or necromancy.

Mr. Morris's actions being upon a better foundation of credit than usually such relations stand on, whoever attempts to ridicule them, will, instead of turning them into jest, become the object of ridicule themselves.

Mrs. Heathcote, his aunt, died when he was about seventeen years of age, and he was then left to his own management, at a time when youthful follies are apt to bring young men into dangerous situations; but this was not the case with Dick; for his skill in divination, as will hereafter appear, saved him from the shoals of dissipation; and as he was situated rather about the world, his resisting the temptation to err might be supposed to be the greater wonder.

His reputation had so far increased, that he received the most flattering invitations from the neighbouring as well as the various gentry who visited the wonders of Derbyshire; and the baths at Matlock being then the greatest resort of all that was fair and polite at that time, he made that his residence during the summer season for many years.

He was not a twelpenny fortune-teller, like the conjurors of London, who have only learnt the knack of scratching a few oblique lines, which they call a figure, and say it is astrology; neither did he attempt to make an almanack; but his opinion was so certain, that the first families in the kingdom had recourse to him for advice, and his delicacy on these occasions was only equalled by the certainty of its truth. Among innumerable instances, the accomplishment of the following circumstances is undeniable. The late Dr. Woodward, his wife, son, and daughter, being at the bath at Matlock, had an inclination to see this wonderful man of

DICK SPOT, THE CONJUROR.

knowledge. They accordingly consulted him; and vain would he have concealed from the mother the ultimate fate of her daughter, in particular; but he had gone too far, and therefore was obliged to own to the old lady what he had not entirely concealed from the father; which was, that in less than six months she should be deprived of her daughter by the small-pox. The young lady was then about sixteen; and if an evil could be prevented by forecast, or eluded by art, she had the fairest opportunity of having his words proved false, for her father was a very eminent physician; and distempers of this kind are much more easily prevented by care, than cured by art; for when there is timely caution used by the doctor, to prepare the body against the danger of the poison, every hope may be entertained. But neither Mr. Morris's admonitions, nor her father's skill and prevention, were sufficient to ward off the approaching evil; for she died, as was foretold; and her mother soon after followed her to the grave.

A very different fortune was predicted, by the seer, to her brother, only then eight years old. "Longevity in the service of his country, and an honourable retirement, would close his career." In fact, he is still living: he was at the battle of Dettingen, June 16, 1743, where the King was present; and afterwards at the battle of Fontenoy, in the King's own regiment. According to the newspapers of the present month, (May, 1793,) he offered his services, for the defence of his country, to General Howe, K. B. commanding the eastern division of forces at Colchester, and remains a living and convincing proof of Mr. Morris's superior skill in future contingencies.

The above prediction was made about the year 1729, before Dick attained his twentieth year, and when the number of his consultants were so considerable, that numbers were obliged to remain many weeks for their interview.

Neither did his fame in this part of the country ever suffer the least diminution; for when he was there last, in August, 1790, a certain hopeful heir, hearing of his fame, got admission to him, and, after answering some general questions, the querent asked, "What does my mother think of me?" "Why," answered Dick, "she thinks you are the greatest rake alive; and I think you the greatest fool for many parts of your conduct." The conversation soon ceased, not being agreeable to the illustrious inquirer: but I have often heard Dick say since, that he believed his high-born customer would never like or forget the lesson he carried away.

While he was at Matlock, he constantly lodged at the Quarry-House, with Mrs. Moore, a widow, who kept it for company. This lady, from the numerous suit of visitors which constantly attended Dick, when at her house, took it into her head to 'set her cap at him;' but he was a bird not to be taken by chaff. He knew her circumstances better than herself; and her impatience to wed got her at last into a labyrinth of trouble, which nothing but death extricated her from. Her children, as Mr. Morris had foretold her, came to unlucky ends: the eldest boy was executed at Devizes, for

sheep-stealing : the two others went abroad, upon the ill usage of their father-in-law, and were both lost, with the ship they were in, in the Straights of Sunda, in the Indian Seas ; and she herself survived her second husband but a short time : his want of conduct had driven them out of the house, and grief shortly after put a period to her existence.

The appetite of curiosity, which daily brought him so many visitors, while it increased his finances, occupied so much of his time, that, to enjoy himself without disturbance, he was often induced to travel many miles, to escape the impertinence of inquirers, mostly of the female sex, who pressed, all eager to know when fortune would take them from the servitude of their friends to the society of husbands.

His first business with his visitors was, after touching the fee, to tell them their names, occupation, place of abode, and the purpose they came about ; and he was always more particular with the men than with the ladies ; for some of the gentlemen he would take with him to another inn, to enter more fully into particulars than he well could at the place where they came to consult him. This was the case with a merchant, who with much importunity got him to his own house in the neighbourhood of Matlock, and, after a couple of bottles, and some general conversation, he informed his entertainer, that he should soon hear of very great misfortunes at sea, greater than one that had passed three years before, observing, at the same time, "that advantages and losses being concomitant circumstances to persons in trade, were always general topics, which persons unskilled, or but slightly learned, might venture to assign to any man in his profession ; it being a thing next to impossible, that persons who trade should not sometimes gain surprisingly as well as lose exceedingly." But Dick was not one of those who went by guess, or first drawing the facts from the enquirer, and then framing an artful and ambiguous answer. He boldly sketched and particularized the future misfortunes, as well as the successful circumstances, which were to happen.

"You will," continued Dick, "soon have a run of ill luck ; but you must meet it with grace and courage, when I tell you it will be but momentary ; therefore resolve to meet it : what it is I shall relate to you while we drink another bottle ; but remember, I cannot drink your wife's health : she will prove worse to you than the storms which will enrich Neptune's dominions with the spoils of the three ships you have a share in at this moment. A worse storm than all this attends you at home. The high tide of her extravagance, and the violent wind of her vanity, will wreck your already disastred ship in the haven of adversity ; but be comforted ; I see a fortunate circumstance in your favour ; but this time I shall wave letting you know what that is. For the present go home, and be resolute to meet your near unlucky fate. But despair not, man ! and remember the wretched to-day may be the happy to-morrow." The merchant was obliged to retire at last, without the satisfaction of knowing what was so much in his favor, after

such cruel disasters as were soon to follow. In short, he went home, and in about three months after failed, and being in a large way, caused many more to become WHEREAS in that place, which was Chesterfield.

About half a year after, the same merchant came again, and told him, "that his first prediction was too far verified to his cost; and that his affairs were in such confusion, that he thought them beyond any visible means of a future recovery; and doubting lest the other or more fortunate part of the prediction was only told him by way of encouragement, conjured him most earnestly to inform him, if there was yet any hopeful reversion for him in this world. Upon this, Dick made a short and very significant reply, advising him to take care of himself with mighty circumspection; telling him, at the same time, that that day month, the Friday, he would be in fatal danger of his life. He coloured immediately upon this intelligence; and desired Mr. Morris warmly, to explain himself; but no more would he tell, only repeating, "that, without extraordinary precaution, it would prove fatal to him even to death." He then shook his head, and retired. So the Augur warned Caesar to "beware of the Ides of March."

Friday past; Saturday morning came; and on that very Saturday morning came likewise the joyful express of the safe arrival of a considerable property which had long been given over for lost at sea. He came the moment he received these dispatches from his agent, to Dick, and thanked him with gladness, amidst a large company at the bath; declaring, that Mr. Morris had saved his life; for Friday was his birth-day; and that day he intended to shoot himself, for which purpose he had previously provided himself with a pair of pistols.

From the foregoing, as well as the following relation of facts, it will appear plain, that some things are entirely in our power, while others are as plainly removed from our reach, and that Providence has wisely hid the Book of Destiny from the inquisitive eyes of men.

The same which Mr. Morris acquired by the certainty of his prognostications, spread farther and farther; and was I to attempt relating every person's story that I daily hear of, even now here in London, I should exceed the bounds of a considerable volume. His reputation reached Paris; for in the year 1739, his *elogé*, that is, an encomiastical character of him, is given in the *Magazin des Scavans*, where he is compared to Nostradamus himself, and to Tasso, who, it is there said, had an attendant genius.

But such reputation as Mr. Morris now possessed, could not be enjoyed without some envy. Even a cousin of his, one George Heathcote, set up in Chesterfield for a fortune-teller, and in his bills cried down Dick as an impostor. But there can be no wonder in this; for the foregoing named Nostradamus (though favoured by Kings and Queens, which always, without any other reason, creates enemies) was not more pursued by envy and detraction for his prop-

dictions in France, than our Dick Morris was in England, his detractors continually throwing dirt, that some might stick.

An affair happened about this time, that occasioned much discourse in the country, and served to establish his reputation as a certain mysterious foreteller of future events, and proved that he excelled in practice as much as Ovil did in the theory of metamorphoses.

It was in the summer season at Buxton Wells, when that place was crowded with the best of company from Derbyshire, Yorkshire, and Leicestershire, and the neighbouring counties; the same year that Old Duke William of Cumberland, the uncle to his present Majesty, was there, the summer after the Rebellion, 1745-6. Dick, who delighted in surprising and astonishing the public, the better to carry on his unaccountable deception, disguised himself in the character of a wealthy old gentleman, who had come hither for the benefit of the waters, and for the relief the gout. The bustle of the place, the concourse of visitors, the variety of entertainments, and every possible sort of amusement, added to the pleasure of meeting with many an old friend and acquaintance, seemed to promise Dick that his time would not hang heavy upon his hands; and the disguise he assumed promised him recreation and pleasure.

The inn in which he lodged being one of the first in the town, was crowded with strangers from all parts of the country, among whom Dick distinguished himself, and attracted universal notice, by the singularity of his dress, the bluntness of his manners, and a kind of mystical reserve in all his actions. His appearance commanded respect: no Quaker could exceed him in gravity of countenance; no Popish Jew in extent of beard; for, upon this occasion, he assumed a very capacious one. A strange high hairy cap, and long banyan, gave him such an oriental look, that his oldest friends did not recognise him. He occupied the best apartment in the inn; was attended by his own servant; took no notice of, much less entered into conversation with, any of his fellow lodgers; went out regularly every day after dinner, and seldom returned home till midnight. Though he daily walked about the town, he was never once seen to associate with a single individual; but walked up and down, solitary and pensive, like a man oppressed with care; and whose looks augured the most intense studiousness upon some important subject.

His extraordinary character and appearance excited every one's curiosity to be better acquainted with him: for this purpose, inquiries were circulated all round; but it was impossible to procure the smallest intelligence about him. The landlord was asked; but the host, shrugging up his shoulders, answered only with a significant shake of his head; and the waiters were as ignorant as their master: in fact, nobody seemed to know any thing about him.

The company had not been a month in Buxton, before almost every one there missed some valuable article or other: some lost their purses, several their pocket-books; the ladies lost their minatures, lockets, fans, and even the rings from off their fingers.

These losses were attributed by some to their own carelessness; and others placed what they missed to the account of some dexterous professor of legerdemain, who had followed the company to ease them of these precious valuables. His Highness was not himself exempt from the general collection; for he also lost his gold watch. However, every one prudently determined to be more cautious and circumspect in future, till, day after day, fresh losses were discovered; cloaths, male and female paraphernalia was missing. The waiters and the servants were questioned; these, however, not only disclaimed all knowledge of the frauds, but complained loudly themselves of various articles of their own being got strangely out of their possession.

"May I be damned if I spend another night in Buxton!" exclaimed an outrider from London, who had lost his order-book, samples and all. "You must certainly have left them at home," (cried his companion;) when posting back to the house, he unpacked his trunk, and emptied its contents upon the floor; but all to no purpose; pocket-book, notes, and samples, were irrecoverably gone. The greatness of his loss hardly suffered him to be convinced of its reality; and, after searching all night, renewed his rummaging next morning, but with no better success than before.

It is wonderful (but still it is true) that so much property was conveyed away nobody knew where, how, nor by whom; and yet no suspicion fell upon any one in particular. Dick's reserve and distance kept off all suspicion; but by what confederacy it was executed, it is not in the power of the mind of man to guess. The confusion which these daring and repeated civil depredations occasioned in the place, is easier guessed than described; and the reader must recollect, there was not at that period a police establishment there, like that of Bow Street, now in London. The public crier was fully employed; and bills, describing articles, and offering rewards, were every where stuck up. The London rider was the first who took it into his head to apply to the unsociable gentleman for advice: it somehow hit his fancy, that he might know or guess something of the stray articles.

He posted away early to the inn where Dick was before the time of his rising. He found the servant up; and, after sending up his compliments, for his intrusion at so early an hour, waited below with patience until Mr. Spot, the strange gentleman, appeared. The serious look which he put on, sufficiently indicated that he came to ask some important question; and Dick, who read physiognomy shrewdly, guessed his errand.

"You have been robbed," said Dick, as he entered the room. "Yes," replied the rider, "of my pocket book, order book, and samples, and some other articles besides: but what gives me most uneasiness, is my employer's property." "Give yourself no uneasiness further," replied Dick. "Go home, and you will find all your articles in the window-seat where you left them, and take better care in future." He stood mute with astonishment. The same hand which conveyed away one person's things, had no doubt car-

ried away the rest; this rendered the rider extremely anxious to know the offender; but before he was sufficiently recovered from his surprize to commence his enquiries, Dick had left the room and was withdrawn.

The rider was in too great a hurry to repossess his articles, to stop long at the inn; and being quite a stranger to the singular character which had just given him such agreeable intimation, he prudently withdrew with joy and haste to his lodgings, where he found his room door open, and the very identical articles in the seat of the window. He examined them, and found his notes safe and untouched. He stood petrified with amazement. His relation to his acquaintance of his success in recovering his property in so singular a manner flew like lightning; it was told with rapidity, and listened to with avidity. In a few hours every one was informed of the London rider's good luck, and no less than above a score determined next morning to visit the sage.

Not only those who missed property, but all those whose curiosity urged them out of bed at an early hour, besieged Dick Spot's lodging at his inn; but no Dick Spot was there; nor his man had not been neither. The waiters were questioned whether the strange gentleman had returned to the inn last night? They answered in the negative. "Has he left Buxton then? did he make any mention of travelling?"

"To have taken any notice to us of his intended journey," replied the waiter, "would be contrary to the mysterious reserve of his character. It is, however, probable enough, that he is gone. His reckoning he settles every day after dinner; and as to trunks or baggage, we have seen none of the kind along with him."

"Suppose we step to his apartment—We are curious," said some, "to satisfy ourselves about this strange gentleman, whether he is actually gone or not." The key stood in the door; but, excepting the usual furniture of the room, not the smallest trace was there of any person having lodged in it.

This was a great disappointment to the visitors; and nothing but patience, the great remedy for all things of the sort, could be applied. Dick, who easily foresaw what effect his indicating the restoration of the rider's property would have upon the public mind, and not caring to be beset with such a throng of visitors at once, had set off, and, with his man Miles, had taken a private apartment, at a small farm-house, a short distance between Matlock and Buxton.

Previous to the rider's leaving the place, he had been supplied by one of his master's customers there with a note of 25*l*. upon a substantial house at Derby: and being low in cash, and the bill being drawn payable at sight, he set out next morning after breakfast to get the money. He met with no difficulty in finding out the house; but had so much the more in finding his pocket-book, which, after feeling for, first in his right pocket, then in his left—then in the right again, and so on alternately for a full half hour—was actually missing.

This was worse and worse; a fresh loss, and where to repair it he knew not. Evening approached, and found him very thoughtful, and busy in searching his pockets for his books, which, however, did not appear. He returned to the inn again, and relating the story in the kitchen, a post-chaise boy observed, that he had just brought up a lady and gentleman from Bakewell, for the express purpose of consulting the cunning man whom they had met that evening on the road. In describing his dress, there remained no doubt but it was the mysterious gentleman who had helped the rider to his property at first, and whom so many visitors at the Wells wished to consult.

The third or fourth day after his disappearance, he returned again to the same lodgings he had occupied before. He had not been there many hours before it was known all over the place, that the strange wonderful gentleman was come back to his old quarters. They beset the house, each being eager to consult him, and to enquire after some lost or strayed articles. Among the foremost of these was the above-mentioned rider, who yet was hopeful of hearing of his pocket book and note, which had been, as he thought, purloined from him so unaccountably. As soon, therefore, as he heard the news, he repaired to Dick's landlord, who had just received a parcel from a carrier, directed to him; but without advice, and from whom was all a mystery. Upon opening it, he discovered various articles of property separately wrapped up, and all directed to different persons. The landlord meeting the rider in the passage, accosted him with more than usual gaiety.

"Sir," he began, "I have an agreeable piece of news to communicate, that will, I make no doubt, afford you equal pleasure and surprise. I understand, Sir, that during your stay here, you have had the misfortune to lose something, and to recover it again as surprisingly."

"That, indeed, is but too true," he replied, with a look that seemed to ask, whether this was the pleasant and surprising news he had to announce.

"These losses," continued the innkeeper, "have been productive of much trouble and uneasiness to me, as well as the losers, Sir; for the credit of an inn, you know, Sir—" "But to the matter of fact," abruptly spoke the rider, interrupting him. "Is your wonderful old Jew-looking Turk of a lodger at home, who helped me to my pocket book and other things a few days ago? for I have since lost it again, with a five and-twenty pound note in it; and I verily believe he DEALS with the DEVIL."

The Innkeeper shook his head. At the same instant he was called off to attend some company, who came likewise to advise with the restorer of lost goods for the recovery of some things they missed.

But how great was the surprise of many, to find the very articles they came to enquire after in the landlord's possession, directed to themselves! By what means these had been first obtained, there was little room to doubt; but the return of them without

a fee, was in the highest degree mysterious. This disinterested proceeding, and unaccountable integrity, surprised all the company, and made every body more and more inquisitive after these singular circumstances. Amongst the foremost who came to ask after Dick, was a shopkeeper who missed his ledger. He and the rider had the luck to obtain an audience with him the first. To the tradesman he said, "Go home, make yourself easy; your ledger is at present at Birmingham, whither you sent it yourself to your correspondent; for you packed it up yourself by mistake in the hurry you was in on Wednesday last, and you will receive it safe back again on Monday next." "Young man," said he to the rider, "your pocket-book and its contents are safe: look under your bed; you hid it there in a dream in the night; and if you don't fetch it away directly, it will get into another direction; and the money for the draft will be obtained by the servant maid's Sweetheart, to whom she will give the book as soon as she finds it."

He went back, and found it just as described to him. He tendered the bill for payment the same morning, and left the country, reporting every where the skill and generosity of the mysterious stranger.

Whether it is choice or necessity directs us in the pursuits of what pleases or suits the turn of our genius, I shall not here venture to decide. Mr. Morris's talent was eminently remarkable for creating surprise, and sometimes terror; and where he was known, robberies were seldom or never committed; and when done, the goods, if enquired after of him, were sure to be restored to the owner; though in no instance that has ever come to my hearing, did he ever impeach the thief. While he was here disguised, a house was robbed of all the cloaths after washing, that were hung out to dry. Upon application to him, he comforted them with the intelligence, that in three weeks time, all the things would be brought back in a large bundle, and thrown over the wall into the yard, which happened exactly according to his word. A notice of this is mentioned in the Gentleman's Magazine, for July, 1792. His fee, when he took one, was never less than a guinea; but he would answer a letter for half; and he always professed to return the money, if circumstances failed of turning out as he foretold. In many cases he refused presents, though from the wealthy. It is wonderful and surprising that none knew him in Buxton through his disguise; but the astonishment ceases a little, when it is considered, his reserve, retirement, and taciturnity of disposition, made him more talked of than personally known, even at his usual place of residence, Bakewell.

Hitherto he had not taken up the profession of a fortune-teller in a regular way, but rambled about doing singular feats, sometimes for money, but of enen for his amusement. He once called upon a gentleman he did not know, at his country residence, and told him one of his servants was dishonest, and robbed him daily, and would be the cause of his death, if he kept him in his service to the end of the year; but yet he would not tell him which it was

of three; upon which the gentleman discharged them all. A short time after a tradesman's bill coming in, indicated plainly enough which it was: but the matter dropped there; and the master's life was, perhaps, preserved by the augury of Dick Spot.

By what means he was enabled to effect such uncommon things is the first consideration of a reflecting person; but much more amazing stories are reported of him by the Shrewsbury and Shropshire people, who knew him for the last 30 years of his life, than I would wish to relate, as fearing the imputation of fabulous narration. Reason can only judge what is in human power, from certain indubitable operations and visible effects only. When there are not a sufficient number of examples and testimonies clear and evident of further powers, their effects must surprise, and remain questionable by every one who has not seen the practice of such abilities or genius.

The removal and destruction of Mrs. Golding's effects at Stockwell, in 1772, though perfectly out of the rules of common occurrences, and the result of some occult property which time hereafter may discover, is not more extraordinary than many of Mr. Morris's actions, some few of which I shall notice; but I shall confine myself chiefly to his character as a teller of fortunes.

He was met with once on the road between Matlock and Buxton by a person who knew him well; and coming by a man who was fast asleep on some loose hay in a field, says his friend, "Cannot you make some sport with that man? Just stop now, and frighten him out of his sleep." "Stop," replied Dick, "a few minutes. Now look at him." Just as he said these words, the man started up, and ran precipitately off, leaving his fork and hat upon the ground. He scoured away until he came to a pond of water, into which he plunged himself, cloaths and all. But he soon came out again; and when he returned to his fork and hat, Dick and his acquaintance asked him what occasioned him to run into the water so fast. "Why, I dreamed," answered he, "that I was in a house on fire, and that my cloaths had caught, and I awoke and found myself in the water."

Though so close and reserved, his propensity to serve the poorest person was too visible to be overlooked. Matlock was then but a very poor place, inhabited chiefly by labourers in the quarries, who mostly live in hovels of their own erection, not bigger than hogstyes. At this place he discovered an industrious stone-hewer, who shewed more signs of ingenuity than might be expected from a person of his class. The fact was, the man had intuitively instructed himself in the first principles of Algebra, a science of which Dick was mighty fond. This was enough: Dick advised him, and lent him money to come up to London, which he did, and, according to his prediction, advanced himself by marriage with a master chimney-sweeper's daughter in Wormwood-street, London Wall.

He continued thus to give advice upon all future actions in a most remarkable and certain manner. Health, sickness, riches, marriages, preferment, journeys, and all the incidents of life, even

warning some of their deaths. But when character was involved in the question, or might be affected by the answer, he was very cautious and tender in that point. Robbery and dishonourable practices he often discovered; but seduction before marriage, or infidelity afterwards, he but sparingly indicated. One instance, however, I cannot help mentioning, because it is remarkable. A lady waited upon him one morning with two or three of her friends, a gentleman, and a servant in livery. None of these knew ought of her, but that her conduct was as discreet as it ought to be. Now this lady was very unbelieving; and, after putting several frivolous questions, and expressing many doubts of the truth of his answers, and much impertinence, he told her, that he did not take fees in his way to be made a jest of, like a common fortune-teller, but to do real service to his consulters, if they would take warning by his advice; and that persons of the first fashion had been to him, and behaved better than she did; so saying, he offered her her guinea back; but she had more generosity than to take it, and declared, she came for the purpose of hearing a little of his knowledge. After a short pause, he gave her this warning. "I can tell you your name, your connexions; and, if you mean to make a jest of me, beware of yourself! You are not a maid, wife, or widow! You have a child at nurse at Wirksworth; and you were brought to bed in Leicestershire. The father of the child is at present upon a voyage to the East Indies; but you will die before he returns; for solid happiness is not for you. You are welcome to your money back again. Woman! I am no deceiver: if you seek flattery, seek it elsewhere; my words are the dictates of truth." It is in the power of the writer of this narrative to assure the reader, Mr. Morris's words came exactly true; for she soon after died, in consequence of a cold caught in her feet at the funeral of a relation.

Mr. Morris was often vexed by people coming to him disguised, and in masquerade. He had suffered from an insolent assault of some ruffians, if his wonderful forecast had not preserved him from the intent. The plot was well laid, and some women were concerned; but Dick was aware of their intention, and frustrated it in a very comical manner.

At the George at Sheffield, some out-riders from town were in the habit of using one room in particular: and when there were none, the room was locked up, and no one allowed to use it. To this house Dick was invited by a very polite message, intimating, that a select company would be waiting for him at five in the evening, when some ladies, who had particular questions to propose, would attend. The business of decoying him into the ambuscade, was undertaken by a woman of the town, hired for the occasion, but who was ignorant of the intent of the party who sent her. Dick, whose foreknowledge of the affair made him arrange his defence in a manner that might surprize, as well as confound, these presumptuous friends, hired one Old George, a chimney-sweeper, and a droll fellow, Dick watching his opportunity, and having given his associate a clue how to act, plants him in the room, near

the fire-side, with a pot of ale before him. His grim appearance very much displeased one of the riders, who was just come in, and who, while he went to the bar to complain to the landlady of the intrusion, and of the infringement of privilege, suddenly disappeared up the chimney, where he remained, notwithstanding the smoke that was made, by burning some sheets of brown paper to force him down. Presently the company came that were to consult Dick upon the subject of futurity; and after some preliminary conversation, began to taunt him with ignorance of their intentions towards himself; and, in short, told him, they would prove him an impostor to the whole town. Mr. Spot told them, that he understood bear-garden as well as they; and if there was a gentleman among them, he should expect genteel usage. The reply to this, consisted not in words, but action. One of the company, disguised in officer's clothes, commenced the assault, when, in the instant, down came Old George, the sweep, from the chimney, with a whole shoal of soot, and running into the midst of them, put the most to flight, who imagined it was Old Nick; and the rest that remained were glad to compound for their clothes, not caring to engage with a bushel of loose soot. The landlady hearing a noise, came into the room with a broom in her hand; and making at sweep, he, to save himself, once more tries the funnel: up he gets, out of sight, and knowing the house well, descends by another flue; and, before the landlady left the room, he was again standing behind her, making faces.

As good luck would have it, Dick had warded off their blows with tolerable success with a quart pot that stood upon the table; and, excepting a chair or two, that got crippled, there was not much damage done; and the Philistines had nothing to boast, being obliged to run, and leave the conjuror and his devil behind at last.

He often met with banterers and people of unbelieving dispositions; but they never retired without being completely convinced that his abilities were superior to the boasted advertisements of the London Siderial Artists, whose chief aim was to gain a good living by the credulity of the ignorant.

The principal of these for the time being were as follows. Mr. Creighton, a gentleman and a scholar, but unfortunately very poor, about 40 years ago, used to be followed by great numbers, on account of his skill in fortune-telling and the medical art. He resolved questions at the Old Bailey, a few doors from Ludgate Hill, on the right-hand side of the way. His predecessor was one Perkins, an officer of excise, who was in his way a very clever and skillful artist, inasmuch that the celebrated Edmund Halley, twenty-three years astronomer royal at Greenwich, was his good friend, and purchased his library after his death. Creighton was succeeded by several of various fame. One Powell, from Bristol, bore the greatest sway; but his manœuvres got him into Bridewell, for making a great shew with three gilt balls: an Alderman and Sheriff visited him, and not knowing them from Common Council (or common) men, they incarcerated him for his ignorance. For many

years past, that celebrated spot has still been distinguished for the most veratic fortune-tellers, videlicet, the JUDGES at the SESSION-HOUSE.

Dick's art of divination was surprisingly accurate and discriminating, and made him very positive in every case he undertook. A lady's maid in the habiliments of her mistress, her mistress in her own, with their footman in a suit of his master's, once waited upon Mr. Spot, who, after viewing the fee, observed to the lady, that it did not signify her disguising herself, nor her exalting her livery servant in his master's clothes; no deception could pass upon him, he could always see through such. The lady remarking that he paid less respect to her, and more to her servants, than he ought, as she thought, accused him of want of practising manners. Mr. Morris replied, and assured her, that he knew several chamber-maids as genteel and well born as her, and many mistresses more awkward and lower bred than their maids; that he did not go, therefore, by the rules of the world, or of guess, to judge what ought to be, but by the unalterable rule of certainty, and by the knowledge of what actually was. She was, however, very dissatisfied with these reasons, and wanted sadly to know more relating to herself, and not so much about them. She grew warm at last, and began to use such language as Dick never relished; upon which the man of knowledge replied, "This footman, Madam, will advance himself to the degree of a gentleman, and have a woman of distinction to his wife; while you will degrade yourself, by a second marriage, to be the WIFE of a FOOTMAN. His ambition is laudable; your condescension mean: therefore I give him the preference. I have given you fair warning, and wholesome advice: you may avoid your lot by prudence; but his will certainly be what I tell you."

This coming to pass afterwards exactly as he predicted, and his disappointing to many that had a mind to impose upon him, rendered him, after a while, pretty free from such witty contrivances; though now and then some would take it into their heads to practise some petty impositions upon him; but he always discovered them, to the utter disappointment and mortification of the contrivers.

He was very penetrating in his judgment, and could distinguish truth from falsehood in conversation; and, what is still more surprising, he could tell if the narrator was the inventor of the story he told, or whether he was indebted for it to another. Once I remember, being in company where he sat, hearing all that was said; when a talkative and forward young man was going on at the rate of twenty knots an hour. Dick soon stopped him with, "It's a lie. I never heard nor saw you before; but I can tell you what you must own to be true; and that is, that you are now amusing this company at the expence of your veracity. You have served near three years in the navy, which you entered in the beginning of 1779. You have been twice home from America, in a vessel, with dispatches; once with an account of the capture of

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Charles-Town, and again with the news of Prince William's arrival. I could follow you through every scene of your life—every where—to New York—on board the *Warwick*—to Antigua—the place of your birth—and now to England again: but take warning, and pray be cautious how you use the traveller's licence to tell lies."

To obviate the accusation of writing falsehoods about Mr. Spot, it will be necessary first to observe, his talent at fortune-telling, though great and rare in those days, was not without precedent, in former times, according to history. Mr. Thomas May, in his history, book 8th, writes, that "An old man crowding very hard to take his leave of King James the First, when he was coming into England, being admitted into the royal presence, took little notice of Prince Henry; but addressing himself to the Duke of York, afterwards Charles the First, fell a weeping, to think of the misfortunes he should undergo; and that he would be one of the most miserable and most unhappy princes that ever was."

An old Scotch nobleman, who was remarkable for his gift of predicting the future fortunes of folks, upon being asked to give his judgment of the then great George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, as soon as ever he saw him, "Fish!" said he, "he will come to nothing: I see a dagger in his breast." And his fate, it is well known; was decided by Captain Felton, as every reader of history must remember.

Sir William Dugdale, in his *Barologium* relates, that Major General Middleton, afterwards created Lord, going into Scotland, to endeavour to raise a party for King Charles, was told by an old gentleman there, that his endeavour was good; but he would be unsuccessful; and besides, that they would put the King to death; and that several other attempts would be made, but all in vain; but that his son would come in, but not reign in a long time; yet he would at last be restored. The same author relates, that "An old man, in South Wales, told a great man there, of the fortune of his family, and that there should not be a third male generation;" which happened accordingly. Mr. Spot has been known to make the same observation of the Lyttleton family, which did not produce a third male heir, from the great Lord George.

Thus the reader may see what respectable authorities may be produced, to prove that wonderful and true predictions have been delivered by many persons in former as well as in our times. Lacy's prediction of the French revolution, an hundred years past, is as remarkable as any I can produce; and we shall find hereafter Mr. Spot foretelling, in print, some circumstances, in a manner as surprising as certain, and of which it cannot be said that any sort of deception could be in the way.

Fortune, that does nothing moderately, was so favorable to Dick, that he was now enabled to keep his coach and livery-servants; but he still saw customers, most of which, it must be owned, were of the fair sex, who thronged, crowd after crowd, to his house, to consult him about their future occurrences in life. The curious questions were as various in their persons, age, quality, profession,

art; and trade; as they were in the curiosity of their minds, and the questions they had to propose to him; some of events that lay yet as embryos in the womb of time, and were not to come some of them to a maturity for birth for many years after; just as we read in oriental history, of porcelain clay being stored up in the earth by curious artificers, which their heirs made china of some-times more than a century afterwards.

Although his property was considerable, and he was considered as an Esquire, these numberless customers were as welcome to him as before; for he seemed to make fortune-telling his delight, and wealth and plenty did not make him in the least relax. From all the country round, Staffordshire, Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, the people poured in to this wonderful predictor of future events. To all, he would answer upon the following heads: Marriages? Good or bad Children? What kind of life men should lead, and in what condition they should die? as to Riches? Honors? Preferments? Peace? Plenty? and Good Weather? It was likewise usual with persons that had lost any thing, to come to him to be directed, how, with what persons, and in what place, they should find their goods. His name had even a magical effect upon the clowns; and his discoveries, and consequent restitution of goods to the owners, made him feared by the evil-intended, that his presence and residence were considered, by all honest men, as a benefit to the place. Though he humoured his fancy in visiting many of the lesser places in the neighbourhood in disguise, he began to be now so well-known, that his arrival any where was as soon known as if it had been notified in the Public Gazette; and "I'll go to Dick Spot," was the usual tone with every one, young and old, who threatened others with seeking after redress for real or imaginary wrongs.

In the course of his public practice as a predictor, many similar questions and cases came before him, which it would be as tedious as unnecessary to relate. One is enough of a sort; therefore, to diversify this narrative of his life, I shall present to the reader only the most mysterious and surprising cases in which he has rendered himself so singularly famous; observing at the same time, that man is not only left free, even to think, and will evil, but in the perfect exercise of freedom, and also to do it as far as the laws of his country will allow it: as a proof of this, the following case will testify, and at the same time shew the impossibility of avoiding our fate. A wealthy farmer, near Locksley Chase, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, came to Dick Spot, to know what was become of a gray poney he had missed from his grounds above a month. After Dick had informed him, that all search after it was fruitless, for it was killed, and the skin in a tan-pit; he told the farmer that he could tell him of something which concerned him a great deal more than the trivial loss of a horse or a poney; and that was, he particularly cautioned him to beware of impure connexions, lest a decay of nature, proceeding from that cause, should throw him into a consumption, and shorten his existence. Now, in con-

sequence of this warning, the farmer told me he became very cautious in his acquaintance; but, in spite of his precaution, he had soon the misfortune to receive an infection from a person he should never have suspected, and which, although proper care was taken of it, threw him into a decline, likely to put an end to his existence; and though the exact time of his meeting with this accident was not pointed out by Dick, it would have been in vain if it had; for he told me, that he was so sure of the lady's preference and affection for him, that had it not been for that circumstance he should have married her. The same farmer waiting upon Dick about the effect of his illness upon his life, for he was then in a seeming decline, as he went along, his dog started a young leveret, and killed it. He took it up, and went and hid it in a hollow tree. As soon as he came in, Dick said to him, "Why did you not bring me the leveret your dog killed, instead of hiding it in a hollow tree? And he refused to answer him any question until he brought it him. After this, he gave the farmer, for his guinea, a small bit of paper, curiously folded up, and fastened together, with a strict charge not to open it, or let any body else do so, nor even to look at it, but to go and bury it at night secretly in the chase. He did so, and recovered from his indisposition. Persons often came from far and remote parts to him, with medical cases of their own or others. A wealthy yeoman of Stanington, near Sheffield, waited upon Mr. Spot one day with the case of his son, who was given over by the physicians. Says Dick, "Go home, friend; your son's life is saved: but though his life is saved, I cannot change his fate, which will be to be hanged in five years hence." The old father is yet living; and the son was executed at Warwick about eighteen years ago.

A young lady, about seventeen years of age, daughter of a very respectable inhabitant of Warne-Fort, near the three shire stones, absented herself from her father's house. She was no sooner missing, than the most diligent search was made after her, both in Bakewell, Tideswell, and back again at Wirksworth; even as far as Derby, and further, for several miles round; but all to no purpose. An intimate acquaintance of her father's went to consult Mr. Spot upon the subject. With seemingly and, perhaps, real regret, he told the lady's father's friend that she was drowned; and he told him exactly the spot where her body yet lay. The gentleman having returned home, went to the place which Dick had pointed out, with men and proper instruments, and her body was found under a lighter, in the river Dove, a little below Uttoxeter, near Tutbury, where it had lain more than a week. This affair, however strange it may appear to sceptical persons, was affirmed upon oath before the jury, who held the inquest at the Ram, at Scropton. Verdict—Lunacy.

Curiosity is a prevailing foible in almost every man; and the person who is capable of performing any wonderful exploit, seldom fails to excite the attention of the admiring multitude. This affects the learned and simple. Dick being at Frankwell, near Shrewsbury,

one market day, at the White Horse, and the house very full, some wags who wished for fun, though, perhaps, at the expence of reason, desired him to make sport for their diversion, and shew them something extraordinary. — “You would not like to pay for any mischief that might be the consequence, I suppose; would ye?” The company being in a high state of hilarity, promised every thing, upon condition he did something out of the way. A higgling earthenware-man, having taken his stand at the door, was spreading out his wares to the inspection of the public, when Dick asked them, if they would pay that poor man for the damage he should sustain, if he set him about breaking his goods? They all agreed to every thing he proposed, and calling for more liquor, prepared to see something surprising. Dick never moved out of the room. In an instant, as if taken with a fit of insanity, the man began to break his pans and pitchers with a large stick, when, after having nearly demolished the whole of his ware, away he ran, as if in a pursuit; leaving the remainder of the large pitchers to take care of the little ones. The jovial company beginning to feel, not only for the expence of so much mischief, but something else for themselves, earnestly desired Mr. Spot to desist any further from shewing his abilities. In fact, he frightened them so, that some of them declared afterwards, they feared the Devil himself would come to fetch them next.

Though the mischief was so sudden, and there was little time for reflection, being a market-day, a considerable crowd soon assembled; but upon Mr. Morris promising every sort of recompence satisfactory to the tradesman in hard goods, and the company in general declaring it was their intention to subscribe for the damage done, old Mr. Drinkwater, the wool-stapler, and Mr. Crump, the warehouseman, particularly pledged themselves to see him satisfied.

When the earthenware-man returned, and was asked what could induce him so suddenly to break his goods, he replied, with tears in his eyes, that he thought he saw a great dog striding over, and pissing upon his goods, which he lost in the pursuit, and could not help lamenting that he was under the delusion of the Devil. However, after giving him ample recompence for the loss, and making him drink with them, he became a little reconciled; and more so than some of the company who contributed to the disaster; for Mr. Littlehales, who was one particularly, always thought and spoke of it as done by magic; and from this Dick Spot was often afterwards called Dick-Hell-finch.

Strange and wonderful as this may sound, it is not more so than the mysterious actions of a youth Mr. Morris brought up. This boy seemed to inherit his patron's spirit, and shewed much of his manners. He was born at Ashford, in Derbyshire, near Bakewell, and lived with him many years as a servant out of livery, and used to be called, The Magic Youth. While Mr. Morris lived in Derbyshire, the boy was often at his father's, where he used to play the conjuror in a surprising manner. From the time

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he was twelve years old, to his final departure from England, (as will hereafter be mentioned,) the family was often terrified with dreadful apparitions; sometimes calves or dogs without heads, appeared to their sight, and seemed to walk through the house; and once, during a thunder-storm, he foretold, that part of his father's house would suddenly be thrown down; and the event soon after justified the prediction.

Whenever he came to see his father and the family, if he met any one as he was going there, he would inform them what they had done, the last thing before they came out, and what was the substance of the discourse of the company they were in at such a time, mentioning the day; and if any had the hardiness to deny the truth, he would promise them an alarm, and that they should be frightened in an unexpected way in a short space, by his arts, which always happened as he foretold.

The perplexity into which his father was brought by him, was not lessened, when Mr. Morris declared to him, that his son's mischievous practices would bring him to an unlucky end; that he had done all in his power to warn him of his wickedness in misapplying his talents. Although he carefully concealed his intention of speaking to his master, the young man told his father every particular of their discourse together; and moreover, that his master would discharge him soon, which he did, at the father's earnest request, in order that he might send him abroad. When his father went into Yorkshire, to consult with a relation about the way of disposing of his unlucky son, the young man told his companions what his father was about, and the discourse he was holding, where, and with whom. One evening he described his reception at his relation's; and boasted, that one of his invisible acquaintance had broke a bottle of wine, which had just been brought out of the cellar. At the same time he declared, that the coach upon the top of which his father would return should be overset, but nobody hurt; all which proved true.

At New Meadow, and Tideswell, where this youth used often to go, he so alarmed the neighbourhood, that many applied to his old master to prevent him from acting his malevolous deceptions: yet no detection could be made by what means the lad attained this art, which so alarmed the whole neighbourhood.

At last the unhappy father was advised by some of his relations, residing in Yorkshire, to send his enchanted son to the East Indies. This advice was complied with; and accordingly he was sent, with his own consent, in one of the Company's ships, to Asia, where, by some interest or other, he quickly became captain of one of their country ships.

In this situation he soon after perished; and his death was as remarkable as the actions of his life; for the vessel which he commanded, in fine weather, suddenly sunk, and the whole company perished with him. There were four ships in company with the disastrous captain at the time his vessel went down, whose officers all agree in this account of his exit.

Many such passages as the above occur in the life of Mr. Morris; every thing relating to him was surprising; and though sometimes not altogether wearing the complexion of credibility, and inexplicable upon philosophical principles, were, notwithstanding, exactly true, although unaccountable. His telling his consulters their names, and the purposes they came about, without any suspicion of confederacy, is as remarkable as any thing which the JEW BOOKMAKER of the curiosities of literature has plagiarised from obscure authors, whom nobody ever heard of.

He was as often consulted upon the event of lawsuits as any thing. Upon these subjects he was as circumstantial as a judge in giving his charge to the jury. Among many others, the following will shew his extraordinary skill in the lost and found way.

A Mr. Ralph, the traveller to Messrs. Spence and Coulman, merchants of Leeds, happening to be at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, lodged there, at the Queen's Head Inn. In the afternoon, about five o'clock, when he returned home to his room, he found his bags gone; they contained about 80*l.* in cash and small notes. After much search, they were at last found rifled in a garret of the house; but nobody could tell how or by whom they were conveyed thence. The landlord declared, in the strongest terms, his innocence; as did also the servants, when examined before the magistrate; and Mr. Ralph was obliged to send home advice of the accident. His employers immediately applied by letter to Mr. Morris, who returned for answer, that they must enter an action against the landlord, and they would recover the loss. The action was accordingly brought against Boniface, to recover the above sum; and, after the examination of several witnesses, the jury gave a verdict for the plaintiffs for the whole amount.

A gentleman at Stewsbury, being about to enter into a concern with others, with whom a foreigner must unavoidably be concerned, applied to Dick for his opinion of their success upon the undertaking. This application was made to him at Kingland, in the show of goods; and his opinion, without any previous consideration, was afterwards remarkably justified by the event. He told the enquirer, that if his friends did not look well to themselves, before it was too late, their ruin was in all probability inevitable; and at the same time urged him strongly to persuade them to abandon a connection, which, if persisted in, would eventually prove of the most fatal consequence to them all, if they did not follow his advice.

The gentleman acquainted them with the result of his conversation with Dick Spot on the subject; but one of them, being dazzled by the golden vision that danced continually in his too sanguine imagination, treated his advice with coolness and indifference. The others, to do them justice, seemed to pay somewhat more attention to the matter. However, in a short time afterwards, certain occurrences took place, the recital of which is not material, nor of any consequence to the matter before us. Suffice it to say, that their eyes were at last effectually opened; and they were now all fully convinced of the truth of what he had foretold them, and took

their measures accordingly; by which means they saved upwards of 700*l.* which would otherwise have been sunk, to all intents and purposes, in this unlucky undertaking.

What is here related is a fact: However, like a good many more circumstances relating to the foreknowledge of this wonderful man, I confess I do not expect to be credited by many; but let those who disbelieve, enjoy their scepticism; for there is small encouragement, indeed, to attempt to convince some people of a supernatural interference in the common affairs of the world. I refer such to read Dr. Cook's letter, of Leigh, in Essex.

About fifteen years since, a lady lost, by accident, a valuable diamond ring; and being a present from her husband before marriage, she was more concerned for the loss than if it had been of twenty times the value. The lady got a gentleman, an intimate acquaintance of her husband's, to visit Mr. Morris, and enquire of him what probability there might be of obtaining again the absent jewel? To this question he very readily replied, that it was fallen into the cinders in the bed-room, where it would be immediately found when looked there for. But, added he, "your friend's wife suffers a greater loss, of which she is totally ignorant; but if she follows my advice, she will recover it, and soon and easily. For," continued he, "she has lost a great many hundred pounds, which her aunt (naming her name) left her. She has been shamefully cheated; for just upon her death, she being present, was artfully required to go down stairs, about some pretended business or other, while a busy relation conveyed away the real will out of the drawers, and substituted a fictitious one in its place; and several other things of value were also then transferred from hand to hand, to her very great prejudice." Here he convinced the gentleman so much of his skill, that he promised to bring his friend, the lady's husband, in a week or two, to consult with him himself.

When he returned to the lady, though he related all that Mr. Morris had said, and of her being called down stairs at the precise time the will was produced, she could not be easily induced to look among the cinders for her ring; although she had just received assurances of things of a greater interest than the mere finding a ring, of perhaps ten pounds value. At last, however, she took the resolution, and, with the assistance of her maid, and in the presence of this gentleman, she found it, as Dick had said. This was the very day twelvemonth after the death of her aunt. The joy and surprise of finding her ring again overcame her so far, that she immediately ran to her husband, and relating the story of the loss and recovery of it, added all that her husband's friend had brought from Mr. Morris, persuading him to go and consult him himself about the will of her aunt, and the means and probability of recovering any of the property so unjustly withheld. At first her husband but lightly thought of the scheme, and would have fain laughed her out of conceit of it; but it would not do, and by constant entreaty she persuaded him at last into a consent to accompany her to Mr.

Morris. As soon as they arrived, he told the gentleman the business he came about, and described the house so particularly, that he even mentioned four poplar trees that stood in the path-way before the house. That though he had never substantially seen it, yet he had it so fairly before the mind's eye, that, he could cause a tolerably exact drawing of it; and moreover, he was positive he should recover it if he went about it in time; but if he neglected, it would be lost, as a material witness, who would turn out in his favour, would shortly be called away, and then the conveyance of the real will would want proof of support. The gentleman, though somewhat yet of an unbeliever, was not displeased with the notion of recovering so considerable an accession of fortune, as the whole was described, and particularly as Mr. Morris assured him, it would be soon given up, and with little litigation. However, he said he would consider of it, and not enter upon it too rashly; and, before they left Dick, he told them the name of the witness who would come forward in case of necessity to prove the shuffling of the will.

In every company he came into, it served him for discourse and diversion. Every body, however, agreed it was worth his while, since the journey could not be so very expensive as to deter him from making the attempt; and his wife continually saying that she remembered some talk of a house, and such things as Mr. Morris had described, she prevailed upon him at last to visit the spot, which lay on the road to Stockport. To make the matter short, as the remainder of the circumstances are not relevant to the story in hand, the owner at last obtained a writ of ejectment for possession; and the Court of Chancery compelled the parties usurping to give account of profit for time back, and all in less than two years.

Extraordinary as the following circumstance may appear, it is nothing more than he used to do every day of his life, only that the public are not in possession of every instance of his wonderful and mysterious sagacity. A tradesman of Oswestry, one Mr. Howard, went to him October 12, 1791, to enquire after the safety of a female friend then on board a ship upon her return from Jamaica. The solicitude he expressed upon this occasion, induced Mr. Morris to wish to decline his giving a direct answer; but the querent would not be put off, upon which the cunning man informed him, that if he would know, he must tell him that the ship his friend was on board of was totally lost, and every soul on board drowned. He further acquainted him, that some account would be heard of the ship in a short time; and accordingly in a few days an article of intelligence brought by a ship belonging to Liverpool, appeared in the public prints, the particulars of which were, "that in a certain latitude, they saw a large ship answering the description of the vessel missing, to windward of them, and apparently in great distress; but as it blew so very hard, they were not able to bear up to her, to render her any assistance, and she shortly after went down." The name of the ship was the *Fonseca*, from Jamaica.

It must be confessed, that his answering with so much certainty, is

a mystery difficult to be comprehended by the generality of people ; but surprizing as it is, the most septical cannot deny, that in every age, and in every place, superior geniuses have arisen to convince the world, that all the knowledge of man is only to know how little he can know, when he supposes he possesses all the wisdom of the world.

Mr. Spot often took whimsical methods to resent affronts from ignorance or design. A young man who drove a coal waggon from the mine to the town one day, could not get in to be served in his turn at the pit, for Mr. Spot was there getting coals also for his own consumption. At first grumbling upon the unfairness of being put off, a dispute arose between him, the shaftmen, and Dick's carman, which was settled by his master in the following singular manner ; the cart became immoveable for near two hours ; nor could the teams of several other carriages put it in the least motion all that time ; for Dick, at going away, said to him, he must stop another hour for his hurry, and think himself well off he did not fix him there all night for his impudence. The truth of this has been several times asseverated to me by the party, who is a sober, discreet, industrious man, a servant in the town.

Incredulity in matters of fact is but prudence, when the relation comes from questionable authors, who chiefly aim at the sale of their books, or at gaining the admiration of the vulgar by surprizing stories : but how astonishing soever a relation may be, if it be confirmed by several hands, and especially by discerning men and eye witnesses, we ought rather, at least, only suspend our judgment, than reject the circumstance upon the head of impossibility. In his profession, Mr. Morris was thought by those who knew him to exceed all other astrologers. He lived in good credit, and was well spoken of by the generality as a good sort of a man. He was charitable to the poor, and never meddled in any political dispute. For near the last forty years of his life he kept his carriage ; but he did not, on that account, take a larger fee, without which he seldom or ever gave his opinion upon stolen property ; and whenever he gave a favourable answer, it was generally found true ; probably from the fear which operated upon the mind of the thief, who, in a country place knowing the verdict of the wise man, and conscious of his guilt, is impelled by fear to restore the property. In this point of view it may be asked, whether a country conjuror is not of more service than a country gaol or gallows ? In the former part of this memoir, I have, I think, sufficiently illustrated the above position ; but with respect to fortunes, and the future contingencies of great folks, he seldom gave his opinion ; but when he did, his words were always fulfilled. I remember when the late unfortunate Queen of Denmark was married, upon his being asked by old General Oglethorpe his opinion of the match, he shook his head, and very significantly observed, her advancement to the throne of Denmark was but a sure prelude to her foreign exile and perpetual imprisonment. "I have waited a while," said he, "to consider of the fate of this poor creature, who had better been married to a

mechanic than a King; for now I am satisfied she will not live long." His opinion upon this marriage was severely verified, for she died in prison at 23 years of age. The General and Sir Richard Arkwright were both present when he made this observation, which is also mentioned in Oglethorpe's letters.

About 30 years since, he gained much attention from mechanical people for a curious invention he made towards the discovery of a perpetual motion on philosophical principles. This power, for it was barely a motion, he applied to the machinery of a clock, which he partly constructed himself. This clock he had contrived to go two years without winding up, by the weight of a single pound, that gave motion to a pendulum of 23lb. which moved through the space of 518.409 inches in 24 hours, while the maintaining pound descended but 1-10th of an inch. His perpetual motion he so contrived to apply to it, that this most extraordinary piece of workmanship possessed thereby the faculty of winding itself up by the weight of the atmosphere, as long as the change of the weight of the air (five times in the course of two years,) should cause the mercury either to ascend or fall 2-10ths of an inch in the barometer above or below the mean height. From a fair comparison of its friction of common clocks, Mr. Elliot of the 'Change assured me, he believed it might have an interrupted motion for ages. Its principles were his invention, and of the simplest nature. Since his death, it is deposited in the Grecian Museum at Litchfield.

His leisure hours were all employed in some mechanism or other. There is a clock of his making at the White Horse at Frankwell, in Shrewsbury, which is mostly constructed of wood, in which he has applied an uncommon and very curious escapement and compound pendulum of his own invention. This, though a wooden clock, scarcely errs a second in a month.

He had a chair so contrived, that as soon as a person sat down in it, a huge skeleton, carved out of wood, sprang up from behind, and clasped the party who was sitting fast round the body; nor could they release themselves, not knowing or being able to touch the spring that forced the machinery back. The following remarkable circumstance is of so public a nature, and the proofs themselves so irrefragably authentic, that it is out of the power of cavil itself to deny its authenticity.

Mr. Morris, who was a great admirer and correspondent of the Conjuror's Magazine, wrote a letter to the Editor of that work in December, 1791, the contents of which appeared under the "NOTICES FOR JANUARY," Vol. I. page 144, in the following emphatic words; "Kings will be privately tormented, and conspicuously impotent. The common people martial, melancholy and wicked. The Government of England will be strong; of Austria, and Germany dejected. The HEAD of Sweden will die a cruel and unnatural death." Here I shall stop the quotation, as the remainder relates to other things not necessary to lay now before the reader, and make the following observations. The Magazine came out the first of December, and was in the hands of the public all

that month, as well as January, February, and March; four clear months before the month on the 26th of which, (April,) 1792, he fell a sacrifice to the too successful attempts of Ankerstrom, the regicide, and died twelve days afterwards; the news being announced upon 'Change the 15th of May. "Austria and Germany dejected, are clearly understood by the defeats the former met with from the French, and the POISONING the late Emperor, which happened before the death of the King of Sweden about a month.

Here nobody can venture to say was a prophecy made after its accomplishment; and, moreover, I can declare I had the letter soon enough to have inserted it the month before. See the Conjuror's Magazine, Vol. I. page 396.

Though Mr. Morris seldom indulged himself in Political forecasts, yet his friends sometimes would get something out of him that very nearly related to public events; particularly once in a large company at the White Horse, at Frankwell, he positively declared that an accident would happen to the Duke of Clarence, which is likewise recorded a month or two before it happened in the same Magazine. The accident his Highness met with, was the breaking his arm as he was stepping into his coach from Mrs. Jordan's door.

I shall now relate a serious prediction he made to a farmer's man, who gained access to him one morning with the usual fee, a guinea, which he had purloined from his wife, who was about to lye in. But Mr. Morris was not willing to take it, and advised him to go home, and take care of his wife, and act otherwise than he had intended to do by a poor girl that was with child by him, otherwise a woeful fate would await him. He wondered at his impudence. He told him he came to consult him to know his future fortune, when he knew his actions were base in the extreme! "Here, take your money, and this with you. You, and that poor unfortunate creature you have debauched, are born to a shocking end. You have promised her marriage, and ruined her; she is now with child; and I see a terrible death threatening her also; which way I shall not say, but it will happen shortly."

The latter part of the charge was woefully fulfilled in about two months after. She, poor wretch, was, indeed, with child by this monster, who denied her any help in her greatest trouble; and not having any friend to apply to, her father being married to a second wife, who was not kind to her, she concealed her circumstances until she could do it no longer; and when the fatal progress of her pregnancy approached to the end, she took the resolution to drown herself, which she did from off a lighter in the Severn. As for the fellow, he absconded, and was never heard of afterwards; although the parish of Saint Mary, in Shrewsbury, offered five guineas reward for apprehending him for absconding from his family.

Thus neither his honesty, nor the fellow's stupid simplicity, could induce him to impose upon the world, or hide in the least any thing which ought to be known, though his predictions should give never so great a shock to the persons concerned in them.

A genteel young woman, a lady's maid, who was travelling with the family, came one day to Dick, to ask some particulars of her future good or ill fortune; but nothing would he tell her that time, only that she must have patience, and time would discover all to her. This silence of the sage perplexed her much; and she could not help making some sneering remarks upon the fortune-teller's want of knowledge, as she thought; for Dick had appointed her another day to come, when he said he would shew her an absent one that would then be present, and remove the cause of her uneasiness, or aggravate it, if she did not take care, and follow his advice. With this assurance she left him for that time, and remained very impatient for the day and hour which was to produce this singular interview.

She was punctual when the time arrived; and Dick made her sit down while he kept a mysterious silence all the time. She began at last to shew some uneasiness; but Dick bade her be quiet, and he would soon surprise her, and convince her he knew her own secrets better than she did herself; so saying, he opened the window, and looking carelessly on the people as they passed by, saw a young woman knock at his door. He had no sooner seen her, than he turned to her in the room, and said, "here comes the cause of your uneasiness." "Arthur, the coachman, loves this young woman that is just come in, better than ever he did you, or will. I was unwilling to tell you so the time you was here before, because I know you have lent him fifty pounds, in hopes he will marry you; but you courted him first; however, he will not wrong you of the money, and let him have her he likes best; have patience, and he will pay you."

Having finished these words, he had her shewn up; for it was but upon very singular occasions, that he ever admitted more than one consultor at a time. Having them both together, he reasoned with them upon the impropriety of women's curiosity in general; for he said he was more plagued with that than with any reasonable questions upon the event of human actions. To console the first visitor, he promised her a good and creditable husband; but she must wait, and refuse two offers, even if one of the parties should produce a licence, or put up the banns in church. "The man, who is visible to me, is at present in a merchant's accompting house in Flanders. Ill health will bring him to see his friends, who live in this part of England, and here he will settle; but be sure to refuse two serious offers, and the third will be happy."

Near the same time, the coachman comes to hear a few tidings of futurity. As soon as he entered the room, Dick said to him, "Don't make yourself uneasy about that fifty pounds you have lately borrowed of Sally: she has been with me about you, and I would not at first say any thing to her, because at that time I saw it dangerous; and when she came again, the other party arrived at the same time, and I had them both face to face. It will go well with you all three. Your aunt is dead this three days; advice to you of this is on the road; leave your place as soon as you receive

it, for there are enemies in your aunt's house." This coachman came to a very good estate, and now keeps a genteel inn on the Bath road: but I forbear mentioning names in this place, as it might prove disagreeable.

I believe if Mr. Morris had known the pains I took to find out and trace the affairs of those who came to consult him, he would have forbid me his house: but his art of divination did not stoop so low as to give him any idea of the foolish curiosity I was then exercising. Not but he gave me hints sometimes that I was of an inquisitive nature; and when I have appeared more forward than, indeed, became a person who claimed a share of good breeding, in inquiring into the cases of persons who were desirous of concealing their views, he would often say, "Too curious, too curious by half."

A female customer who had been with him once, upon reading afterwards, in a newspaper, of the loss of a ship, on board of which Dick had declared her future husband sailed in the capacity of surgeon, came and upbraided him with telling falsties, and imposing upon her, and shewing the article in the paper, wanted her money back again; but Dick, after a few turns thoughtfully about the room, coming out of a deep study he had been in, with a great start, as though something just then had awakened him, with a voice beyond what we are able to conceive, he made but one step to the table, at which the party stood, and looking earnestly in her face, said, "You are too rash in charging me with imposition. I have not imposed upon you; and although the ship is lost, I can tell you more than you have yet heard; all the officers and crew perished, but that very William Hales; who, in spite of impossibilities, is destined to be your husband. He is miraculously preserved upon a plank, by which he has got to a rock; he is on it now. I have seen him almost dead with fatigue; and he will be very near famishing before he can reach to any relief. He is about 200 miles off at sea; but he will be in Liverpool in three weeks at farthest. He has nothing but the cloaths on his back, and will beg his way up. You will feed him, cloath him, marry him, and bury him, all within a year."

This restored the lady to a degree of quietness in her own mind, which had been disturbed ever since she had read the article in the news; and Mr. Morris, not wishing to send her away without another proof of his foreknowing skill, told her further, that the sudden change he had lately undergone from safety to extreme danger, and his restoration from want to plenty, would have as fatal an effect upon him as the most pernicious enemy to life. "However," said he, "take comfort; you will be happy in another husband, after his death."

Mr. Morris was very often consulted upon the event of cock fights. Once, in particular, by a party, who engaged to fight a certain cock on a future day for ten guineas forfeit. Within a few days of the fight, the said party's cock got out, and fought, and was so worried thereby, as to be totally incapable of being brought

forward to perform the engagement. What was to be done? Mr. Spot was consulted, and, after considering a short time upon the subject, he selected two particular feathers from a large box full, and sent the party with these to a farm-house some distance off, to match a cock like those feathers, and give him directions the morning before the battle, to give him some small scraps of paper wrote on, which he furnished him with, and told him to roll them up in fresh butter. The birds were curiously done up; and he charged him not to open the paper, or venture to look at the contents, otherwise it would ruin the charm. The battle was fought at the appointed time; and this cock, though a dunghill one, beat his antagonist, and several others afterwards, estimated of the best breed in that part of the country.

Some gentlemen waited upon him one day to decide a wager, which, after he had done in a surprising manner, one of the party concealed a guinea, for his trouble, between the leaves of a large book on the table. It was done so dexterously, that they were sure he did not see them do it; but, as they were withdrawing, he handsomely thanked them for the intended present; and making one of them turn back, told him to turn to such a page, and take out his guinea; for upon wagers he made it a constant rule only to drink with the successful party.

An old gentleman, a widower, who in his younger days was a farmer, but who then lived on his means, having a mind to marry again, came to Dick, to enquire into the integrity of a young lass he had taken it into his head to marry. "If you would take my advice, it will be not to marry," said Mr. Morris. "But I know all I can tell you will not prevent it. It will make you miserable, and by grief will shorten your days. I do not observe here that the young woman is bad; but she will become so; and you will find her free both of her person and purse. You used your first wife ill, who was a virtuous woman; and the justice of Providence will permit this to revenge her cause. I can give you but little hopes upon this affair: you have seen your best days, but you must fulfil the decree." It happened sure enough as he said; and the old man, who loved his money more than his young wife, had the mortification to find both desert him a long time before he died. A reflection on this, and many other affairs mentioned before of the like nature, is enough to make one wonder that his consultants should not, when told them so plainly, as he mostly did, of the evils they were about bringing on themselves, endeavour to prevent them, and somehow strive to avert their fate. But this very rarely happened, and never did, I believe, when love was the motive; for that little fly enemy to reason and reflection, always comes at first in a shape too pleasing to be resisted; and we are apt to think the follies we commit on his account easily excusable.

There was nothing in which Mr. Morris differed from the common fortune-tellers, more than in his plain-dealing; for though his proceedings were very mysterious, and his answers reserved, yet, to please his visitors, he never flattered them with predictions of ap-

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proaching happiness; and, when urged to shew an absent persons never consented to it, but upon a very few and singular occasions. He was as cautious of saying the worst, because, as he used to observe, every one had not the courage to support such information; but only such accidents as prudent management might prevent, or at least abate; and these he never failed to give warning of, and good advice which way they were to be avoided; as in the case of several, which are still living, spread all over England, and indisputable witnesses of what is here related.

Two particular instances of this sort I remember as follows. The first was a young woman in the country, who applied to know how a certain person, to whom she was contracted, would behave to her after marriage. He paused a good while before he would return her any answer. But being pressed by the young lady past refusal, he at last told her, "You have been imprudent in your affairs; you have managed them ill; you was wrong to give up all to a man who despises the advantages he has gained. But this I will tell you for your comfort; you will survive him; for he will be killed by a fall in a wrestling match." She was very importunate to know more; but no further would he tell her. This so displeased her, that she complained of his unkindness to many persons. But remark her dismal fate, which made a great noise in the country; about three months after the death of her seducer, and in the last month of her pregnancy, to avoid the scandal of the woman, she took arsenic, and at once destroyed both herself and the infant within her.

The other is still more emphatical. A young man, just 17 years old, finding himself ill used by his guardian, applied to Dick for advice. "You are too late now; you should have asked my advice before this time; and, what is worse, you have a nearer friend, a mother, who thinks less for your interest than her own satisfaction; she is about marrying, and the consequence will be, to cheat you out of every thing your father left you." This confounded the lad: he confessed he had a mother; and though he was the only child, she was not so kind to him as she ought to be; and declared, if things turned out so, he would go to sea. To this resolution, Mr. Morris remonstrated, in very warm terms, upon the impropriety of it, assuring him, he would never prosper in any employment upon the water; that his first attempt would be unfortunate, and the second would be the last; for the disaster he would meet with would cause his death. But if he would take his advice, he would try to get a rider's place in the liquor line; for that Dick promised him most success. This was all he would tell him at this time, and desired him to call again as soon as his mother was married. It happened in about six months, as he had said, she married again; and when the lad came to him, he came full with the resolution of going to sea, let the consequence be what it might. It was in vain Mr. Morris argued with him on the fatality awaiting him; to sea he would go, and to sea he went. A few months elapsed when news was brought to Liverpool, that the ship had suffered so much

in a storm, that they had hove all the goods overboard, and that some of the hands had perished. His mother now came to consult Dick about her son; and the reception she met from him was not so much what she expected, as what she deserved. Mr. Morris was so severe upon her for her unnatural conduct to her son, that she could not refrain from mentioning it to some of her neighbours; and likewise that he told her, her husband would come to nothing in less than two years, by gaming and other excesses, which was soon too visible to be long hid; and the law put a period at last to his liberty and his life, for he died in prison for debt.

About this time the young man returned from his first voyage, and soon engaged in a second, which was to the Isle of St. John, in Newfoundland, in the Cod-Fishery; but from which neither he nor the ship ever returned, or were ever heard of, after sailing homewards from the Island.

Towards the latter part of Mr. Morris's life, he saw but little company, and yet less on the score of fortune-telling; and those who were admitted to sit an hour or two with him, might take it as a favour if he condescended to answer any such questions as he used to delight in in his youth. Charms, and spells, and such magical delusions, if they may be so called, (for the country folks had great faith in them,) he had long left off dealing in. Yet how he had performed some notable cures, such as old inveterate agues, removed by burying three bits of paper sealed up, in a secret part of a field, and other disorders, by burning scraps without looking into the contents, is so unaccountable and extraordinary, that I am at a loss to account. But the truth is attested by many respectable witnesses, both in town and country; proving, that every thing belonging to the history of this wonderful man, was beyond the settled rules by which human actions and the ways of man are in general regulated.

And now drawing to a conclusion, one thing it is but justice to Mr. Morris to add, he had a very strong sense of religious duty. Till within a very short time of his death, he was in the habits of reading prayers twice a day to his attendants, and others, whom curiosity, or a better motive, led to form his congregation; and when the fatigue of this exertion was more than he could encounter, he still once in the day performed his public devotions.

To those who have a curiosity to hear the history of his last moments, I shall just subjoin, that exhausted nature went off gently, and without a struggle: yet there certainly was heard a very extraordinary rapping against the wainscot of the room he died in, and of which he seemed sensible, but not affected by it; for when his attendants asked him if he heard the noise behind the wainscot, he faintly answered, "Yes," and a little while after he said, "My continuance will be determined by the light of the lamp which will go out before morning," and which assuredly came to pass as he had said.

Thus lived, and thus died, the mysterious Richard Morris, Esq. at the age of 83, March 4, 1793, at Oswestry, in Shropshire; and on the tenth he was buried in St. Mary's Church-yard, Shropshire.

The following Sleight of Hand Tricks were practised by DICK SPOT when a Boy.

How to play at Cups and Balls without hands.

YOU must provide six cups of one size and metal, (persons with hands require but three,) but keep three of them concealed in your juggling bag, until occasion requires you to bring them out. The dexterity performed by the three first cups, is thus: take out of your bag your three cups, place them on the table or board: you must have balls of cork provided and concealed, but one ball must be on the table. Then say, gentlemen and ladies, turning up your three cups (though at the same time you must have a ball concealed) you see there is nothing under my cups, I take and put this cup there, I put the second there, and the third there. The ball you have hid must be clapt under one of the cups at the time you are placing them. You must have a tin bottom in the inside of one of your cups, and holes punched in it like a grater. Then say, gentlemen (taking the ball off the table, placing it on the cup the ball is under) observe I cover this ball with this cup, clapping the third cup on the other two, then say, *Presto*, I command the ball from under the middle cup to the bottom. Then taking off the first and second cups, the ball they think is gone to the bottom; whereas the ball that is laid on the top of the undermost sticks fast to the grater that covers it, and when the cup is turned up, it is the ball that was conveyed first that appears. Next place take the ball that is on the table, and say, gentlemen, there's but one ball left, clapping the cup with the tin bottom where the ball is concealed over that ball on the table so as the ball that was sticking to, the tin falls down, and makes two: then clapping the cup down, convey another ball you've secured, and say, *Vene tene*; then say, gentlemen and ladies, there are three balls and three cups. First having secured two balls, (having some strange gestures of body and speech to take off the eyes of the spectators) at the same time taking up one of the cups, put it down on one of the balls with the two balls secured; then clap the second cup on the second ball, and the third cup on the third ball. Now say, I've covered the three balls. Then turn up one cup, and say, Here is the first ball; then turn up the other, saying, Here is the second ball. Then take up either of the balls, and lay it on the top of the third cup, and cover it with the cup that has the tin bottom, clapping the third cup in the place of the other two; say, gentlemen, there is one ball at the bottom, one in the middle, and the third and last ball I strike through the board, saying, *Presto*, be gone. Now you must understand, the third ball you drop, the second sticks to the tin grater, and three balls appear under the lowermost cup: then place your three balls on the table, and your cups opposite the balls, then say, I cover this ball with this cup, and I cover the third ball with

this one cup. Then turning up one cup, take up the ball, and say, *Presto*, I command you under the second up, but at the same time you must retain the ball; for the ball that was sticking to the first is dropped, and make two; then clapping the cup down, with the ball that you have retained, turn up the cup, and say, I'll strike this ball to the other two, and drop that ball, being three before. Next place the balls and cups as they were before. Then clap the first cup on the first ball, and the second on the second. Then take up the cup with the greater, which generally is in the middle, saying, I'll put this cup in my bag. And take up the ball, saying, I'll put this ball in my bag; then take up the next, saying, I'll put this ball in my bag too, clapping under the cup at the same time the ball you've retained. At last say, I shall have too many balls, or something to that purpose, seem in a fury, and toss your cups away: then put them in your juggling bag, that when you shew the other three, the company may think they were the first cups.

A method of drawing a deformed figure, which will appear well-proportioned from a certain point of view.

Draw any thing you fancy on a thin white pasteboard; then prick it; afterwards put the same on an horizontal surface, which we will suppose to be another pasteboard. Put a lighted candle behind that drawing, and draw on the horizontal surface the lines given by the light: this will give a deformed design. This being done, take away the drawing that was pricked and the candle; then place your eye where the light was, and you will see your drawing assume a regular form.

A curious method of restoring to life, in two minutes, a fly that had been drowned even twenty-four hours

This wonderful experiment, like many others, is produced by a very simple cause. Take a fly, put it in a glass or cup full of water; cover it so as to deprive the fly of air; when you perceive it to be quite motionless, you may take it out, and put it on a place exposed to the sun, and cover it with salt; in two minutes it will revive, and fly again.

To change the colour of a rose.

Nothing more is wanting to change the colour of a rose, whether it is on the stalk or not, but to burn some sulphur under it; which will make it turn white, and it will not regain its primitive colour in less than two hours.

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